

Spotlight On



CAPT (Ret.) Bill DeCicco

Since his retirement in 2001, CAPT (Ret.) Bill DeCicco has been the clerk of court of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (CAAF), the civilian appeals court for the military justice system. CAPT DeCicco began his career at CAAF just days after he retired from the Navy, having served 26 years as an enlisted sailor and commissioned officer.

As the clerk of court for CAAF, CAPT DeCicco is responsible for the administration functions of the court, including scheduling oral arguments, ensuring dockets are updated and decisions are published, issuing all orders and opinions, and editing opinions.

His final assignment in the Navy was as a judge and then as the Chief Judge of the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals.

"I had many great experiences in my career, but the thing I value most is the service to my country," said CAPT DeCicco.

A native of San Francisco, Calif., CAPT DeCicco enlisted in the Navy reserve after graduating from St. Mary's College of California. CAPT DeCicco served two years before he was commissioned in the Naval Reserve and began law school. He graduated from the University of San Francisco Law School in 1975.

CAPT DeCicco's Navy JAG Corps career began at the Naval Legal Service Office in San Diego, Calif.

Before heading to his next assignment at the U.S. Naval Support Office in La Maddalena, Sardinia, CAPT DeCicco attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., where he mastered Italian.



After his assignment in Sardinia, CAPT DeCicco headed to Washington, D.C. to serve as an Appellate Defense Counsel at the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals.

After completing three years as an appellate defense counsel, CAPT DeCicco spent a year at George Washington University where he earned his Masters of Law in International Law.

Courtroom Named in Honor of Former Navy JAG



Military and civilian members within the legal profession gathered for a formal courtroom dedication ceremony held at Navy Legal Services Office Southwest on Nov. 16. The newly-renovated courtroom was named in honor of RADM Carlson M. "Biff" LeGrand, for his many contributions to and leadership within the Navy's Judge Advocate General's Corps. This ceremony also marks the first time a courtroom has been dedicated in the Navy.

"It's really special for me to look out and see this collection of people. This is a testament to the man, his legacy and what the Navy is all about," said Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Navy, RADM Nanette DeRenzi. "Just looking at somebody's biography doesn't tell you about who they are. It tells you about what he did. What he did was very special, but who he was is even more special. He was a man of complete integrity, a hard worker, a dynamo, a ball of fire—these are the phrases the people who know him would describe him with. When he chose the Navy as a career, he always wanted to work hard to become better at what he did, but not so he could advance himself. He wanted to be the best he could be so he could bring others up with him," added RADM DeRenzi.

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By Lawson Almand

Administrative Law (Code 13)

It seems especially fitting to me that the courtroom in San Diego is being dedicated to RADM Carlson “Biff” LeGrand. 32 years ago I was a fresh lieutenant junior grade arriving in Guam for my first duty assignment. After 15 hours on a flight from San Francisco, I was exhausted but excited about starting my life in the Navy.

I was relieving “Scotty”, the command judge advocate at the Naval Air Station. Scotty introduced me to my legal secretary, handed me the keys, and took off with a smile. I turned to leave and the phone rang. I dutifully answered, “LTJG Almand speaking, can I help you?” “This is LCDR LeGrand at the Naval legal Service Office (NLSO), who are you?” “I’m the new guy at the air station – just arrived on island and hour ago.” Biff – “Stay where you are, I’ll be right over!” About an hour later Biff hurried in with a stack of folders and books in his arms. “Hey, welcome aboard. I’m the head trial counsel at the NLSO. We’re in the middle of a contested drug distribution case that has gone awry with some investigative problems, and you are the only one on island who isn’t “tainted.” I can’t tell you anything other than that you need to be in court tomorrow, ready to pick this up and run with it!” He left me with the files, smiled, shook hands with me, wished me luck, and told me he would see me in the morning. Biff and the rest of the NLSO sat in the peanut gallery the next day, told me I “was doing great” during breaks, etc. By the way, I lost the case!

I took an instant liking to Biff – as most people did. His energy and affable nature immediately won you over. He always listened – a valuable trait we all need to develop. I admired and respected him. 15 years later Biff tagged me to be his executive officer at NLSO Southwest. I relieved him less than a year later when he was selected as the Deputy Judge Advocate General, and I worked for him again as the commanding officer at NLSO Northeast. I started “working” for Biff as a lieutenant junior grade, and promoted to O6 working for him 15 years later. Dedication of a courtroom to a man who spent so much time in court himself, who trained others to work in them, and who, as the CNLSC improved and constructed them, is most appropriate. I am honored to have known RADM LeGrand and the JAG Corps is better for having him as a senior partner.